



# *News Release*

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## **Acclaimed children's author Gary Schmidt Wins 2011 Michigan Author Award**

August 23, 2011

LANSING – Michigan Center for the Book today announced Gary Schmidt – author of award-winning and critically-acclaimed children and young adult fiction – as the winner of the 2011 Michigan Author Award.

Sponsored jointly by the Michigan Center for the Book (a program of the Library of Michigan) and the Michigan Library Association, this annual award is in its 20th year of honoring Michigan writers for their contributions to literature based on an outstanding published body of work.

Schmidt is among the select group of children's authors who have won prestigious Newbery Award Honors from the American Library Association. His novel *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy* was both a Newbery Honor Book and a Printz Honor Book in 2005 and three years later he received yet another Newbery Honor Book designation for *The Wednesday Wars*.

He has been a resident of Michigan for over 20 years, first moving to here in 1985 to join the faculty of Calvin College. He still is a member of the English Department at Calvin and over his years there has published a steady stream of fiction and nonfiction children's books.

Booklist notes that Schmidt "makes the implausible believable and the everyday momentous" in its review of *The Wednesday Wars*. In Kirkus Reviews' look at *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, a book loosely based on an historical event, the reviewer says: "Schmidt takes his time with his tale, spinning gloriously figurative language that brilliantly evokes both place and emotion."

Schmidt's published children's fiction includes *Okay for Now*, *Trouble*, *The Wednesday Wars*, *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*, and *First Boy* as well as inclusion in literary criticism works such as *The Emmaus Readers*. In addition to his prolific children's and young adult fiction, he has published an eclectic and diverse body of scholarly work.

Schmidt received both his M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He currently lives with his wife, author Elizabeth Stickney, and their six children on a farm in Alto, Michigan.

This year's award will be presented this fall at the Michigan Library Association's "Common Goals, Uncommon Good" conference at the Radisson Hotel in Kalamazoo on Oct. 26-28, 2011. Tickets are available to hear Gary Schmidt speak at the award-presentation luncheon on Friday, October 28th at 12:45 pm. For more information and to access the conference registration, visit the Michigan Library Association website at [www.mla.lib.mi.us/events/annual](http://www.mla.lib.mi.us/events/annual).

Previous winners of the Michigan Author Award include John Smolens (2010), Dave Dempsey (2009), Tom Stanton (2008), Sarah Stewart (2007), Steve Hamilton (2006), Christopher Paul Curtis (2005), Patricia Polacco (2004), Diane Wakoski (2003), Nicholas Delbanco (2002), Thomas Lynch (2001), Janie Lynn Panagopoulos (2000), Jerry Dennis (1999), Gloria Whelan (1998), Loren Estleman (1997), Elmore Leonard (1996), Janet Kauffman (1995), Nancy Willard (1994), Charles Baxter (1993) and Dan Gerber (1992).

The Michigan Center for the Book, a program of the Library of Michigan and the center's affiliates, aims to promote an awareness of books, reading, literacy, authors and Michigan's rich literary heritage. New affiliates are welcome.

For more information about the Michigan Center for the Book and its programs, visit [www.michigan.gov/mcfb](http://www.michigan.gov/mcfb). The Library of Michigan is part of the Department of Education (MDE).

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